



Director of
Central
Intelligence

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National Intelligence Daily

***Tuesday
9 June 1981***

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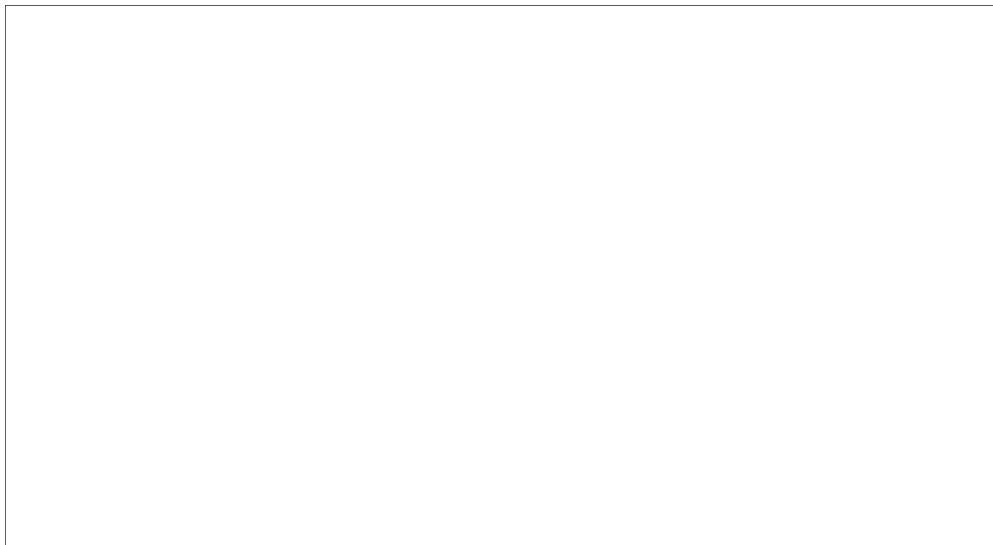
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ISRAEL-IRAQ: Impact of Israeli Attack

The Israeli airstrike on the Tuwaitha Nuclear Research Center in Iraq will set back Baghdad's nuclear program for at least two years, even if rebuilding begins immediately and foreign technicians remain in the country.

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The larger of Iraq's two French-built reactors was heavily damaged

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Although France has condemned the raid, President Mitterrand has criticized French-Iraqi nuclear cooperation in the past and probably will resist requests to rebuild identical nuclear facilities.

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Prime Minister Begin probably views the raid as a major strategic and domestic success. Israeli governments have long regarded Iraq's nuclear program as one of its most serious long-term threats

The action has been widely applauded in Israel and will boost Begin's standing in the polls as he heads into the final stretch toward the 30 June national election.

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Iraqi Options

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Iraqi leaders are playing down the attack, presumably to minimize their own political embarrassment. Baghdad, however, has called for a UN Security Council meeting.

Iraq has no easy options for military retaliation, its surface-to-surface missiles lacking the range to reach Israel from Iraq. MIG-23 fighter aircraft and TU-22 bombers could reach Israel from Iraqi airfields, but Baghdad will be reluctant to risk these aircraft against Israeli air defenses so long as the war with Iran continues.

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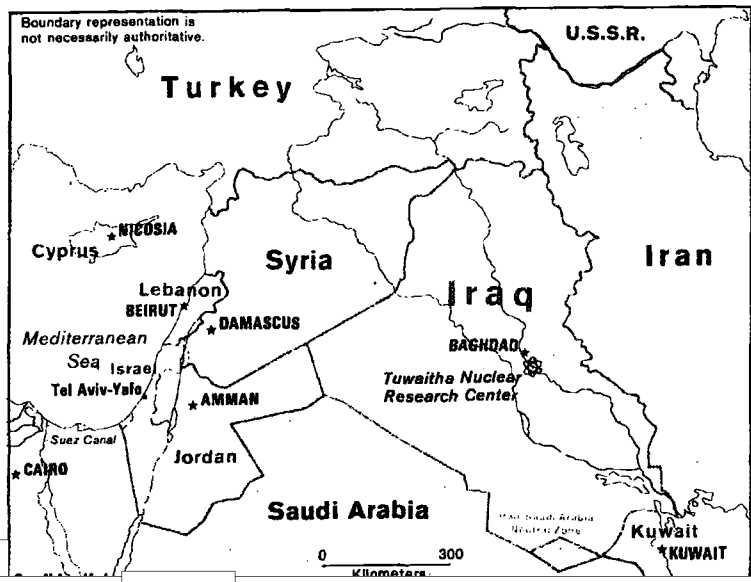
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The Iraqis probably will increase support for terrorism against Israeli targets, perhaps lend more support to Syria on the Lebanese issue, and urge tougher Arab diplomatic and economic action against Israel and possibly the US. They will suspect the US of collusion and may move to reverse the recent thaw in US-Iraqi relations. []

Arab Reaction

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Arab suspicions of US complicity also will complicate US relations with Saudi Arabia and US-Saudi efforts to calm the missile crisis. Damascus almost certainly believes the US approved the airstrike in advance, and the Syrians will be less receptive to US mediation efforts involving Lebanon. []

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President Assad may well be less forthcoming with Ambassador Habib, preferring instead to deal only with Saudi negotiators. Damascus also may seek to improve its strained ties with Iraq. []

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The Arab League yesterday called for an urgent meeting in Baghdad this week to discuss the crisis. Radical Arabs may urge use of the oil weapon, but we doubt the Saudis will sanction any precipitous reaction. []

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Egypt denounced the raid as a threat to the Middle East peace process. President Sadat probably fears the attack will undercut Egypt's efforts to mend fences with the other Arabs, including Iraq, particularly since the raid came soon after his meeting with Begin. []

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Soviet Commentary

The Soviets, who also condemned the raid, are describing the attack as only the latest example of US-Israeli collusion against the Arabs. A TASS report yesterday stated that Israel had informed the US of the attack on Sunday. []

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Moscow will seek to use the raid to improve its ties with Baghdad. If the Iraqis show interest in closer relations, the Soviets may eventually provide them more advanced military equipment. []

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